

RECOGNIZING TRIBAL LEADERS

(Mr. RUIZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RUIZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Tribal leaders from around the country gathered in Washington, D.C., for the National Congress of American Indians' 2020 Winter Executive Session.

NCAI was founded in 1944 with the mission to protect and enhance the sovereign rights of Tribal nations and to secure a prosperous future for Native communities.

In fact, initially, NCAI had to fight against many restrictions and injustices perpetrated by this very body. It is this complicated and challenging history that is the backdrop of the work we do here today.

It is important, then, that the United States Government works to honor Tribal sovereignty, promote self-determination, and fulfill the trust responsibility to Native Tribes.

We must also pass advanced appropriations for the Indian Health Service and provide resources to upgrade the roads, schools, and internet access across Indian Country.

Madam Speaker, I urge the House to take up these issues immediately and do our part to support our Tribal partners.

□ 0915

HONORING JOE BONAMASSA

(Mr. WITTMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Joe Bonamassa. He is one of the most gifted, talented, and accomplished singers, songwriters, and guitarists in modern-day blues music.

Joe works incredibly hard to give back. Joe has founded the Keeping the Blues Alive Foundation. This foundation fuels a passion for music by funding projects and scholarships to allow students and teachers the resources and tools that they need to further music education.

Joe also gives back in other ways. He is an aficionado of guitars and has a vast collection that he uses to extend music history. And he allows people to come and visit his collection of guitars and amplifiers in a place he calls Nerdville, California.

Joe has done an incredible amount for music, for music history, and to advance the cause of music having an impact in an increasing number of people's lives.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing and honoring Joe Bonamassa for his contributions to the world of music.

REMOVING DEADLINE FOR RATIFICATION OF EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 844, I call up the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 79) removing the deadline for the ratification of the equal rights amendment, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the joint resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. WEXTON). Pursuant to House Resolution 844, the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary, printed in the joint resolution, is adopted and the joint resolution, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the joint resolution, as amended, is as follows:

H.J. RES. 79

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That notwithstanding any time limit contained in House Joint Resolution 208, 92d Congress, as agreed to in the Senate on March 22, 1972, the article of amendment proposed to the States in that joint resolution shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the United States Constitution whenever ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The joint resolution, as amended, shall be debatable for 1 hour, equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary.

The gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on H.J. Res. 79.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, this is long-overdue legislation to ensure that the equal rights amendment can finally become the 28th amendment to the United States Constitution.

This year, we will celebrate the 100th anniversary of women gaining the right to vote. Despite the century that has elapsed, our Constitution still does not recognize or guarantee full equal protection of the law for women and gender minorities, but H.J. Res. 79 would bring us one step closer.

The resolution removes the previous deadline Congress set for ratifying the ERA and will, therefore, ensure that recent ratifications by Nevada, Illinois, and Virginia are given full effect.

The ERA offers a basic and fundamental guarantee: Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

That is it. Very simple.

In the years since it was passed by overwhelming bipartisan majorities in the House and the Senate, we have made great strides to secure that equality, including through existing case law decided under the 14th Amendment.

The ERA would enshrine those principles and take the final critical step of ensuring that laws disadvantaging women and gender minorities are subject to the most rigorous form of constitutional scrutiny.

In recent years, we have seen a series of breakthroughs for women's rights and gender equality. We have seen millions of women march in support of their rights and dignity as equal citizens. Through the #MeToo movement, we have had long-overdue and sometimes painful conversations about the violence and harassment that women and gender minorities experience, whether in the workplace, at home, or in schools and universities.

We have seen women get elected to Congress in record numbers. And just weeks ago, Virginia became the necessary 38th and the last necessary State to ratify the equal rights amendment. We are on the brink of making history, and no deadline should stand in the way.

The Constitution itself places no deadlines on the process for ratifying constitutional amendments, making it doubtful whether Congress had the authority to impose such a deadline in the first place. But if it had such authority, then Congress clearly also has the authority to remove any deadline that it previously chose to set.

I want to thank Representative JACKIE SPEIER for introducing this resolution, which takes that important step. This resolution will ensure, at long last, the equal rights amendment, having been proposed by Congress years ago, having now been ratified by three-quarters of the States, can take its rightful place as part of our Nation's Constitution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, three-quarters of the States failed to ratify the equal rights amendment by the 1979 deadline set by Congress, yet House Democrats are trying to retroactively revive the failed constitutional amendment.

Congress does not have the power to do that. Congress set the deadline; it was passed; it did not get approved; and now there is an end run to go around that.

The United States Supreme Court recognized this in 1982 when it stated that the issue was moot because the deadline for ERA ratification expired before the requisite number of States approved it.

The next year, the Democratic leadership in the House of Representatives,

acting on the same understanding, started the entire process of ERA approval over again. But that new ERA also failed to achieve the required two-thirds majority in the House on November 15, 1983.

But today, in defiance of historical reality and the clear acceptance of the situation by all relevant participants in the original debate, the Democrats have brought forward a resolution that denies the obvious. Now, the proponents of this resolution want to convince their base that if both Houses of Congress pass this joint resolution, and it is signed into law, the 1972 ERA will become part of the Constitution just because the Democrats control the Virginia State legislature and that legislature passed the ERA this year.

Even current Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg—and she is taking a lot of heat for this—a supporter of ERA since its beginning, has said, just a few months ago:

I hope someday we will start all over again on the ERA, collecting the necessary States to ratify it.

On Monday of this week, Justice Ginsburg said of the ERA:

I would like to see a new beginning. I would like to see it start over. There is too much controversy about latecomers—Virginia, long after the deadline passed. Plus a number of States have withdrawn their ratification. So if you count a latecomer on the plus side, how can you disregard States that said: We have changed our minds.

Congress does not have the constitutional authority to retroactively revive the failed constitutional amendment and to subject the citizens of all 50 States to what may be the current political trends in just one State.

The U.S. Supreme Court has already recognized that. Past Democratic leaderships of the House have recognized that. Justice Ginsburg has recognized that. But apparently, the current Democratic leadership is intent on re-writing history.

As we have our debate today, I will show, and our speakers will show, what the real intent about this is, and it has nothing to do with equal rights. It has a lot to do with other issues that will be exposed today.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER), the chief sponsor of this bill.

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Speaker, I thank the chairman for his extraordinary leadership on this issue.

This is very simple, Members. Women want to be equal, and we want it in the Constitution.

I am equal on this House floor with all of my male colleagues, but when I walk out, I have fewer rights and protections than them.

I rise today because the women of America are done being second-class citizens. We are done being paid less for our work, done being violated with impunity, done being discriminated

against for our pregnancies, done being discriminated against simply because we are women.

The ERA is about equality. The ERA is about sisterhood, motherhood, survival, dignity, and respect.

The world recognizes this. Of the 193 countries in the United Nations, 165 have put this kind of language in their constitutions, but not the United States of America.

From the Women's March to the #MeToo movement to the pink wave, the outrage we have seen among women is because we have been disrespected, devalued, and diminished in our society. And we are fed up.

It is no wonder recent votes to ratify the ERA came in 2017, 2018, and 2020, because we want the ERA now. We have waited for almost a century for the ERA.

I want to thank my Republican cosponsors of this resolution, including Congressmen Reed, Fitzpatrick, and Van Drew.

I know most of you recognize that this is the right thing to do for your wives, daughters, and granddaughters. Ninety-four percent of Americans already support the ERA. In fact, they are surprised it is not already in the Constitution.

Now, some of you will say just restart the process, but you are the same people who admit you won't vote for it. Some will say, "Well, women already have equality," while they vote against VAWA reauthorization, vote against paycheck fairness, chip away at title IX.

For too long, women have relied on the patchwork quilt of laws and precedents. We have put our lives on the line. We have been forced to take our cases all the way to the Supreme Court, and often, there, we lose.

For my colleagues who think we already have women's equality, talk to Christy Brzonkala, who was raped by two football players at Virginia Tech. She sought justice under the Violence Against Women Act, but the Supreme Court struck down the civil suit provisions, claiming Congress lacked the authority to pass it.

Talk to Lilly Ledbetter, who had to rely on an anonymous note to learn she was paid less than her male colleagues at Goodyear.

Talk to Betty Duke, who was passed over for promotions and paid \$10,000 less for her work at Walmart.

Talk to Peggy Young, who was placed on unpaid leave, losing her health insurance, while pregnant, at UPS, all the while men were granted the exact same accommodation that she was denied.

The ERA is about building the America we want. It is about forming a more perfect Union because, simply put, there can be no expiration date on equality.

I urge my colleagues to affirm their support for women's equality and vote for this resolution.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Arizona (Mrs. LESKO).

Mrs. LESKO. Madam Speaker, I am a woman, so I obviously care and support equal rights for women. But I oppose this bill for three reasons.

First, the bill is not constitutional. When the ERA originally passed Congress, it explicitly set a deadline for ratification. The deadline was in 1979, almost 41 years ago. Only 35 States of the 38 needed had ratified it. Then five States unratified it. So the count is down to 30. Thus, the equal rights amendment was dead.

The U.S. Department of Justice issued a legal opinion just last month, reiterating that the ERA's ratification timeline is expired.

Supreme Court Justice Ruth Ginsburg said:

The deadline passed. I would like to see a new beginning. I would like it to start over.

Secondly, the ERA is not necessary. Women's equality of rights under the law is already recognized in our Constitution in the Fifth and 14th Amendments. The ACLU's women's rights director wrote: "It has been clearly understood that the 14th Amendment prohibits discrimination based on sex." Plus, many Federal, State, and local laws already prohibit sex discrimination.

The third reason I oppose this bill: If ratified, the ERA would be used by pro-abortion groups to undo pro-life legislation and lead to more abortions and taxpayer funding of abortions.

But don't take my word for it. Let's look at what pro-abortion groups have done and what they say.

In 1998, the New Mexico Supreme Court ruled unanimously that the State's ERA required the State to fund abortions. NARAL Pro-Choice America, which supports abortions, asserted that the ERA would reinforce the constitutional right to abortion and would require judges to strike down anti-abortion laws.

In a 2019 letter to the House Judiciary Committee, the ACLU stated: The equal rights amendment could provide an additional layer of protection against restrictions on abortion.

In conclusion, this bill is unconstitutional. The ERA is unnecessary, since constitutional Federal, State, and local laws already guarantee equal protections. And the ERA, if ratified, would be used by pro-abortion groups to undo pro-life laws.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, again, the deadline was not part of the amendment. It was a resolution by Congress. And if Congress can set a deadline, it can remove a deadline.

I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the distinguished majority leader of the House.

(Mr. HOYER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

□ 0930

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I thank Representative SPEIER, Representative MALONEY, and all of those who have been such warriors on this issue for such a long period of time. They are keeping the faith.

This constitutional amendment was passed in 1972, to be specific, in the early part of 1972. I was a member of the Maryland State Senate in 1972, and I had the honor in the late spring of 1972, just months after the ERA had been passed, of voting to ratify that.

Now, the previous speaker said in only 35 States. That is 70 percent of the States ratified that in a timely fashion. Timely in the sense that we set in a resolution, as the chairman pointed out, a date. Seventy percent of the States of this Nation.

Now, it needed three more States. It has now received three more States. I have been an advocate for the equal rights amendment for essentially 4 decades, actually longer. I will be proud to vote for it today.

Just a few months, as I said, after Congress adopted the ERA, Maryland voted for ratification. I thought that it was long overdue even then in 1972. Here we are some 48 years later, and it still is.

Our Founders declared “all men are created equal” in their Declaration of Independence. Surely, no Founder, if they were writing that document today, would have said “men” meant white, property-owning men. Surely, they would not have written that. Surely, none of us would have supported that.

Since the very beginning Americans have been taking steps, therefore, to define that in a more expansive, inclusive term representing our universal values. We amended the Constitution to ensure African Americans and women could not be denied the right to vote. It took a long time. Particularly, I hope the women in this body will think of the suffragettes who were extraordinarily active and involved in our community and making decisions in our families and in our communities and country but who could not vote prior to 1919.

From 1789 to 1919 women could not vote. I am the father of three daughters, the grandfather of two granddaughters, and the great-grandfather of three great-granddaughters. For me to go home to them tonight and say I voted against your being equal in America. Now, my wife passed away, but if I went home to her tonight and said I voted against your being equal in America or those grandchildren and great-grandchildren who happen to have been born as women and say to them I voted against your being equal in America today.

We passed the Civil Rights Act to make clear that all must be treated equal regardless of race. We passed the ADA, which I cosponsored 30 years ago to ban discrimination against those with disabilities. But still nowhere in our Constitution does it state clearly that women must be treated equally

and that one must not be subject to discrimination because of their gender.

The ERA would enshrine that basic tenant of our democracy in our Constitution at long last. Seventy percent of the States and then three more said that ought to be in our Constitution. Three-quarters of the States have voted to ratify this amendment.

Discrimination against women has through our history kept bright and talented Americans from achieving their full potential in our economy. Because of their hard work, the sacrifices, the leadership, and the perseverance of trailblazing women, we have seen barriers come down, doors of opportunity open, and glass ceilings shatter.

Discrimination, inequality, and injustice persist, and we will hear arguments on this floor rationalizing why discrimination ought to still exist. And as long as our Constitution does not explicitly ban discrimination based upon gender as it does based on race, we will continue to see forms of legal discrimination against women linger in our country.

Taking this step to add the equal rights amendment to the Constitution is one of the many that House Democrats are taking to combat discrimination against women simply because they are women.

Last year, we passed the Paycheck Fairness Act. Not everybody voted for that, but, in my opinion, everybody voted for that who thought equal pay should mean equal pay, irrespective of gender and based upon work performed. That built on the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009 to ensure equal pay for equal work.

We also passed the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. Most of us on our side voted for that, but there was a rationalization why some thought, no, we will not protect women against violence.

We have continued working to protect women's rights to make their own healthcare choices and to access quality affordable care.

Who said that was part of the Constitution?

The Supreme Court of the United States. They said that was a constitutional right and we see effort after effort to erode that constitutional right.

I am proud that the Democratic Caucus in the 116th Congress is not only the most diverse in American history, but also includes the greatest number of women.

In Virginia, it was an election that saw the house of delegates reach 30 percent women and the State senate reach 28 percent. Once it got there, the women of Virginia stood up and said this ought to be in the Constitution of the United States, and they voted to do so. Virginia now has a woman speaker of the house, as we do in our U.S. House, and as my home State of Maryland has in our house of delegates. It is because more women are stepping up to run for office and winning elections that more women's voices are being heard in our democracy.

That is why this resolution is on the floor. That is a wonderful thing, and I have been proud to help recruit talented women to run for the House as Democrats. And very frankly, we need more women as Republicans, a diminishing group, I might add.

I urge my colleagues, men and women, Democrats and Republicans, to join in supporting this resolution.

And, finally, is it too late?

It is too late. But it is never too late to do the right thing.

Make this part of our Constitution. Stand up and say, yes, women should be included as all humankind who are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights. That is the principle that we are articulating today.

Alice Paul, who first wrote the ERA and campaigned for it for most of her life was once asked why she kept all her focus on getting the job done, and she said this, “When you put your hand to the plow, you can't put it down until you get to the end of the row.” We are not at the end of the row, but this is a way upon that row to make it complete to make our Constitution protect all people, male or female, Black or white, all people.

At long last, let's hold firm to that plow. Let's get the job done. Vote “yes” on this resolution.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER).

Mrs. HARTZLER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I rise today to commend the women who have gone before us to celebrate the achievements that women have made and to reaffirm the fact that we are equal in the eyes of God and in law.

Women make up 51 percent of the population, comprise over half of the college students, make up most of today's medical and law school students and own the majority of new businesses.

Women are not victims in need of validation. Little girls can be whatever they want to be, whether that be an astronaut, a doctor, a full-time mom working at home, or a member of Congress.

In addition, Federal law and court precedent uphold our rights. That is something to applaud, and I do. However, today's legislation is problematic on several fronts.

First, the resolution is unconstitutional. The time limit to pass the ERA expired decades ago. Congress can't go back and remove a deadline from a previous constitutional amendment initiative. The Supreme Court has recognized that the 1972 ERA expired, and the Department of Justice issued a ruling saying Congress may not revive a proposed amendment after a deadline for its ratification has expired. Pretending that we can remove the time limits for passage is both futile and deceptive.

Secondly, if the time limit could be extended, the ERA would not bring

women any more rights than they currently have right now, but it would entrench the legality of abortion. We know this from court precedent by listening to those who have the most to gain from constitutionally protecting abortion on demand.

In 1998, the New Mexico Supreme Court ruled that the equal rights amendment in their State constitution requires State funding of abortions. Federal courts are likely to do the same. Perhaps that is why every pro-abortion organization is endorsing passage of the ERA.

NARAL Pro-Choice America says, "With its ratification, the ERA would reinforce the constitutional right to abortion."

The National Organization for Women says, "An ERA—properly interpreted—could negate the hundreds of laws that have passed restricting access to abortion. . . ."

But that is not the only concern with passing this resolution. Besides being unconstitutional and shredding State and Federal pro-life protections, the ERA would also erase decades of progress which have provided opportunities for women, advance women's progress through Federal programs, and secure necessary protections for women and girls.

How? By incorporating gender identity in the definition of sex, jeopardizing private spaces for women, girls' sports programs, and women's educational institutions.

The ERA endangers laws, programs, and funding designed to benefit women providing a pathway for legal challenges to welfare programs, grants for battered women's shelters, efforts to bolster women participating in STEM programs, as well as State laws governing child support, alimony, and custody. These outcomes are anything but pro women.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "no."

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN).

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I rise in strong support of H.J. Res. 79, which takes a key step to ensure that the equal rights amendment will become part of our Constitution.

Nearly 100 years after women gained the right to vote, it is difficult to believe we still haven't given women equal rights. It is hard to believe it is a serious disagreement in this Chamber.

In the year 2020, it is unacceptable that women still make only 80 cents for every dollar earned by men and that women are still subject to violence, harassment and attacks on their freedom to control their own bodies.

In Judiciary Committee this morning, a brilliant female law clerk is describing sexual harassment by a distinguished and respected ninth circuit judge. This should never happen. And with ongoing efforts to undermine

progress we have made; the equal rights amendment is more important than ever.

It took over 130 years to give women the right to vote. It is almost 100 years since they have gotten it. It is time to give women their proper place in the Constitution of the United States, which most modern constitutions have, equality regardless of sex.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. WALORSKI).

Mrs. WALORSKI. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I rise today in opposition to H.J. Res. 79.

Of course, I believe in equal rights. Women should never face discrimination and harassment. I believe we should be empowering women and girls to achieve their dreams.

So it is disappointing today to stand in this Chamber and see this important issue turned into some type of political stunt. The deadline for States to ratify the ERA passed nearly 4 decades ago. Even Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg has stated the only path forward is to start over.

Let's be honest, this is not about equality or women's rights. This is about enshrining unrestricted abortion in the Constitution and allowing full taxpayer funding for abortion. Now is not the time to be weakening pro-life protections.

Yesterday, in South Bend, Indiana, in my district, the remains of 2,411 victims of abortion were finally given a dignified burial after spending 20 years in moldy Styrofoam boxes in the back of the doctor/abortionist's car and in his basement.

□ 0945

These unborn boys and girls would be young men and women today entering college.

Moments ago, we stood on this House floor together and we offered a moment of silence that these innocent lives were taken and there were victims, over 2,400.

Madam Speaker, I would ask that, together, we stand again to defend the rights of the most vulnerable among us, that we stand together today for the sanctity of life, to lift women up, to protect women, and to strengthen families.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in voting against this misguided resolution.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE).

Mr. CICILLINE. Madam Speaker, with Virginia becoming the 38th State to ratify the equal rights amendment, today we make it clear that Congress never intended the arbitrary deadline to act as a barrier to ratification of this vital amendment.

Ratification of the equal rights amendment affirms our Nation's values by codifying an expressed prohibition

against sex discrimination in our Nation's foundational document.

While our Nation's courts have properly recognized that women are entitled to equal protection under the law, we have a responsibility to do all that we can to guarantee that, regardless of sex, all Americans are treated the same in every aspect of their lives, including making a living, obtaining healthcare, and accessing public services.

These rights must not be swayed by political ideology or depend on judicial philosophy. Equality is a founding value of this great country and, more than any other word, describes the very idea of America.

Madam Speaker, a vote for H.J. Res. 79 is a vote for equality. I urge my colleagues to support H.J. Res. 79.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin, (Mr. SENSENBRENNER).

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to this resolution.

Listening to people on the other side say that there is a cornucopia of benefits awaiting women should the ERA become a part of the Constitution, I am here to ask Members on both sides of the aisle to look past what looks nice on a bumper sticker or a 40-second sound bite to realize that there are going to be many consequences that will hurt women should this be ratified. I will just talk about insurance, because insurance is regulated by the States.

Girls get substantially lower rates on auto insurance because they are better drivers. With the ERA and the State regulation, that would become unconstitutional, and girls are going to have to pay boy drivers' rates for auto insurance, which really does not reflect the actuarial exposure of that at all.

Secondly, look at life insurance. Women live longer than men and, as a result, in life insurance, also regulated by the States, you see women's rates being lower than men's rates becoming unconstitutional, and women are going to be paying more to life insurance companies for the coverage that they decide on.

I could go on and on and on. We had a lot of hearings on this in 1973.

I am here to say that, when the ERA was originally passed in 1972, women's rights were not enshrined in a lot of State laws. There has been tremendous progress in this area both at the Federal level and in the States. The proponents of this resolution completely ignore that happening. We don't.

We think that the statutory protections that have been passed all around the country in the last almost 50 years have advanced women and have addressed a lot of the complaints that we hear from that side of the aisle.

This is going to unleash a Pandora's box of lots of litigation that has been raised by this, some of which has been brought up by my colleagues on this side.

Let's not enrich the lawyers. Let's do the right thing. Don't pass this resolution. Enforce the laws that have been passed both here and in the State capitols.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I thank all of the women of America. I thank the sponsor of this bill. I thank the chairman of the Judiciary Committee and the ranking member for being on the floor. I thank him.

I ask the question: Does anybody see the sense of women not being in the most powerful document of laws and power of the American people?

Let us be reminded of the words of Abigail Adams: "I long to hear that you have declared an independency. And, by the way, in the new code of laws"—which she is saying to her husband—"which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make, I desire you would remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the husbands."

I rise enthusiastically to support H.J. Res. 79 and to say to my colleagues there is no constitutional prohibition for passing this.

We are grandly involved because this is the 1972 passage by the State of Texas of the equal rights amendment. And here, in 1977, Betty Friedan and Bella Abzug were in Houston at the 1977 National Women's Conference that our predecessor, Barbara Jordan, was at.

Let us pass H.J. Res. 79, because, as Abigail Adams said, let's remember the ladies.

Madam Speaker, as a senior member of the Committee on the Judiciary and an original cosponsor, I rise in strong and enthusiastic support of H.J. Res. 79, which eliminates the ratification deadline for the Equal Rights Amendment and will lead to the long overdue adding of the ERA as the 28th Amendment to the United States Constitution.

Madam Speaker, I am reminded of the imperative powerfully expressed on March 31, 1776 in Braintree, Massachusetts in a letter from Abigail Adams, the future First Lady, to her husband John Adams:

I long to hear that you have declared an independency—and by the way in the new Code of Laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make I desire you would Remember the Ladies, and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the Husbands.

The resolution before us will help enshrine for all time the belief, promise, and commitment that all men, and women, are created equal and endowed with by the Creator with the same inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

We are making real this promise thanks to the bipartisan resolution introduced by Congresswoman Spiers of California.

The Constitution does not prohibit the action we are taking; in fact, it permits it since ratifi-

cation deadlines are not even mentioned, much less imposed by the Constitution. This resolution reinforces that, the previous deadline is no bar to passing the ERA.

Under Article V of the Constitution, the Equal Rights Amendment "shall be valid to all intents and purposes whenever ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several states."

A resolution identical to H.J. Res. 79 has been introduced in the United States Senate, which I call upon the Senate to take up and pass forthwith.

Madam Speaker, it is useful to review how we arrived at this moment in history.

Beginning in the late 1960s, the National Organization for Women (NOW) devised and began implementing a strategy of pushing for equal rights through a combination of impact litigation and advocacy for the Equal Rights Amendment.

I remember this particularly well because in November 1977, the first National Women's Conference was held in Houston, Texas and attended my congressional predecessor, the Honorable Barbara Jordan.

The National Women's Conference was inspired by a 1975 United Nations-sponsored event from two years prior which led President Gerald Ford to establish a national commission to investigate women's issues.

Congress later voted to provide \$5 million to fund the organization of regional conferences and to hold a national gathering at the conclusion, the result of these efforts was the National Women's Conference meant to unite all women and give them an opportunity to voice their hopes for the future of the government.

I remember that Phyllis Schlafly of the conservative Eagle Forum organized and came to Houston to lead backlash demonstration protesting the ERA and the women's movement, claiming that the ERA would force women to give up their right to be supported by their husbands, and subject them to the military draft and deployment to Vietnam.

That was the launch of the conservative counter-offensive to derail ratification of the ERA and the beginning of the schism that has seen equality between the sexes and expanding the economic, privacy, and political rights of women subject to increasing partisan debate and action that is continues to the present day.

In 1970, Congresswoman Martha Griffiths of Michigan filed a discharge petition in the House to bring the ERA to the floor, after the Judiciary Committee consistently refused to act on it.

The discharge petition was adopted, and the ERA passed the House by a wide margin.

The Senate Judiciary Committee also held several days of hearings in 1970 on its version of the ERA but it failed to gain enough votes that year.

On October 12, 1971, the House voted by 354–24 to approve a version of the ERA that stated:

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled (two-thirds of each house concurring therein), that the following article is proposed as an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the Constitution when ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States within seven years of its submission by the Congress:

Section 1. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State on account of sex.

Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

Section 3. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.

On March 22, 1972, the Senate passed the ERA by a vote of 84–8.

The following month, Madam Speaker, I graduated from college in the first undergraduate class of women to attend Yale University in September 1969.

I was a member of the group of 250 upper-class women who transferred to Yale University, a number that eventually led to 1,500 women being admitted over the years, in addition to the 4,000 male students.

Between September 12–14, 1969 undergraduate women students arrived on campus and at that time, 48 of 817 FAS faculty were women and only two had tenure.

I am proud to be a part of the history of Yale University and had the opportunity to speak about my experience at the 50th Anniversary last year.

The presence of women at Yale, which had been an all-male institution was a sign of the change that was sweeping the nation.

I first arrived at Yale with the anticipation and anxiety of any college student arriving on campus for the first time.

This was an extraordinary milestone—both for Yale and for us young women.

But being a "first" is not all that people may assume that it is.

In the centennial year of the 19th Amendment, on January 15, 2020, the Virginia General Assembly became the 38th state to vote to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment, the magic number needed to become enshrined in the Constitution.

Because of the ERA, women are finally included in our Constitution, making them equal to men under law.

A vote to eliminate the ratification deadline for the ERA is a vote for equality; a vote against the measure is a vote to preserve the legacy of sex discrimination.

Women will not continue to be second-class citizens in their own country.

The absence of the ERA has meant that women can be paid less for their work, violated with impunity, and discriminated against simply for being women.

Women made up more than 6 in 10 seniors who lived in poverty last year, with the poverty rate for senior women at 11 percent.

The average Social Security benefit for women 65 and older is about \$14,270 per year, compared to about \$18,375 for men 65 and older.

In the 116th Congress, women hold just 23.6 percent of seats in the U.S. Congress.

In 2019, just 33 Fortune 500 CEOs are women, a new record.

While women-owned businesses account for 42 percent of all firms, women-owned business account for just 8 percent of the total private sector workforce and 4.3 percent of total revenue.

Some legal scholars note the location of the deadline in the preamble is important, because the ERA's deadline was not part of the text that the states voted on when they ratified the amendment.

Other scholars argue that the deadline itself is unconstitutional because Article V of the

Constitution does not include mention of deadlines.

A close reading and clear understanding of the Constitution leads inescapably to the conclusion that when the Framers considered a time period to be of the essence, they specified the time period clearly in the document itself.

Moreover, in *Coleman v. Miller*, 307 U.S. 433 (1939), the Supreme Court rejected the idea that Article V contains an implied limitation period for ratifications.

Madam Speaker, as a country founded on principles of liberty, justice and equality, and a global leader in formulating international human rights standards, the United States need to pass the ERA to meet basic standards for women who are denied equal access to legal rights and protections.

Too many women in the United States inexplicably lag behind international human rights standards and it is a myth that women in the United States already enjoy all of the expected standards of rights and protections afforded under America.

The reality is, women in the United States experience continued discrimination and daunting disparities that prevent them from fully participating as equal members of society.

For example, women have risen to some of the highest levels of legislative and executive representation over the years, yet with 20% of Congressional Members and an average of 24.9% of state legislatures, but the United States ranks #72 in the global market of women represented in public and political positions.

While the number of women justices has significantly increased, women litigants' access to justice is severely limited.

Although women vote in higher percentages than men, women's access to voting is under attack in many states where increased voter ID requirements and voter purges pose unprecedented barriers.

Although women constitute nearly half of the US labor force, at a participation rate of 57%, equal economic opportunity is severely lacking given deficient or nonexistent mandatory standards for workplace accommodations for pregnant women, post-natal mothers and persons with care responsibilities.

What also remains a shameful truth in America, is the gender wage gap which has remained at or near 21% over the past decade.

And women with higher levels of education experience the largest earning gaps, as do minority women regardless of educational attainment.

The percentage of women in poverty has increased over the past decade, from 12.1% to 14.5%, with a higher rate of poverty than men and women are exposed to higher rates of homelessness and violence without adequate protections in place in shelters and housing support options.

Women in detention facilities throughout the country also experience increasingly high rates of over-incarceration, sexual violence, shackling while pregnant, solitary confinement, lack of alternative custodial sentencing for women with dependent children, and insufficient access to health care and re-entry programs.

Migrant women traveling to the U.S., many victims of trafficking and violence, including

sexual violence, are kept in detention centers with children for prolonged periods of time.

The U.N. has reported that women, particularly black and LBTQ women, in the U.S. experience police brutality and increased incidents of homicide by police.

Even though women own over one-third of commercial businesses in the United States, primarily in small and medium sized businesses, these businesses face greater barriers in obtaining low cost capital from sources such as the SBA—which awards less than 5% of federal contracts to women-owned business.

Finally, one of the most alarming deficiencies for women in America is the inability to access basic health care and the imposition of devastating barriers to reproductive health and rights.

Too many women are suffering dire and deadly consequences.

Between 1990 and 2013, the maternal mortality rate for women in the U.S. has increased by 136%.

Black women are nearly 4 times more likely to die in childbirth, and states with high poverty rates have a 77% higher maternal mortality rate.

The United States deserves to much better.

It is unacceptable that women in America are facing a health care crisis so dire that the global community is denouncing it as a human rights violation.

Sadly, the direction States are taking will only further dismantle women's access to affordable and trustworthy reproductive healthcare.

While clinics are shutting down at drastic rates throughout the country, devastating restrictions and barriers imposed throughout Texas strike at the core of this abomination.

A Texas statute known as HB2 (House Bill 2), was enacted several years ago under false claims to promote women's health, when in fact it only set in motion dangerous restrictions on women's access to reproductive health care.

In addition to constant attacks on funding for reproductive health care clinics, abortion providers in Texas were forced to undergo impossible million-dollar renovations and upgrades.

Denying hundreds of thousands of women health care services in Texas, nearly half of all reproductive health care clinics were forced to shut down, and now only 10 remain in the second largest state in the country.

No woman in America should be denied the dignity of being able to make choices about her body and healthcare.

Access to safe, legal and unhindered healthcare must be realized by all women.

These simple facts can no longer be denied, and hypocrisy can no longer be tolerated.

A woman's personal autonomy over her own body and her right to choose whether to bear or beget a child is a constitutionally protected fundamental right.

More than 40 years ago in the landmark decision in *Roe v. Wade*, 410 U.S. 113, (1973), the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 7–2 that the right to privacy under the Due Process Clause of the 14th Amendment extends to a woman's decision to have an abortion.

We cannot ignore the obvious hypocrisy of imbalanced protection and access to fundamentally protected rights for women in America when it is easier to purchase and lawfully possess a firearm—even for a person on the terrorist watchlist—than it is for a

woman to exercise her constitutional right to terminate a pregnancy.

Madam Speaker, this is not fair, and it is not right.

And with the ERA added to the Constitution, it will also not be lawful.

Madam Speaker, Congress had the authority to extend the deadline and it chose to do in 1979; a fortiori, it has the power to eliminate the deadline today.

And that is the right, just, and moral thing to do.

I urge all Members to stand on the right side of history and join me in voting to pass H.J. Res. 79 so that the Equal Rights Amendment can take its rightful place as the 28th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GRANGER).

Ms. GRANGER. Madam Speaker, we have heard my Democratic colleagues say that passing the equal rights amendment is necessary to secure basic rights under the law for women. Not only is this untrue, it obscures a fundamental fact. This ERA actually denies the most basic human right: the right to life. This ERA uses gender equality as a smokescreen to create an unlimited constitutional right to abortion.

Instead of working to craft legislation that protects women's rights without trampling on the right to life, Democrats have put forward, today, an unconstitutional, partisan measure.

Not only would this result in on-demand abortions across all 50 States, but it would also clear the way to provide taxpayer-funded abortions throughout all 9 months of pregnancy, costing millions of dollars every year.

This measure is not about advancing women's rights, especially as women across the country, Republicans and Democrats alike, are increasingly horrified by the practice of late-term abortion and by recent comments made in New York and Virginia that lifesaving treatment should be denied to some newborns.

Allowing women to discard their unborn children at taxpayer expense is not ensuring gender equality. It is not protecting women. It is not empowering women. It is not providing women equal pay for equal work. It is simply another step down the path of devaluing all human life and dignity.

Madam Speaker, I oppose this amendment and urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this measure.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GARCIA).

Ms. GARCIA of Texas. Madam Speaker, I thank Chairman NADLER for yielding.

In Texas, many years ago, I marched in support of the equal rights amendment. Today, I join my colleagues to reaffirm that support.

Women are behind some of this Nation's greatest achievements. We fought for civil rights, set athletic records, sent men to space, and then went there ourselves. We have forged

our paths in history, yet we are still not equal to men under the eyes of the law.

We must remove this stain from our Constitution. Today, we are voting to remove an arbitrary deadline so we can finally prohibit gender discrimination under the Constitution.

Madam Speaker, I will proudly vote in favor of the resolution, and I urge all my colleagues to do the same.

As many in my district would say, "It is time to approve the ERA." "Ya es hora de aprobar el ERA."

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from West Virginia (Mrs. MILLER).

Mrs. MILLER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to oppose H.J. Res. 79.

It pains me to say that life is under attack in our Nation. The pro-abortion discussions taking place around this country are sickening. In the last year, we heard a Governor promote infanticide, and we saw State legislatures take action for the same.

We still haven't had a vote on this floor in the United States House of Representatives to protect babies who survive abortion. Yesterday, in committee, I even introduced legislation that would protect babies who survive abortion. It failed along party lines once again.

We have millions of American families who would love to adopt, yet we don't discuss that. I know women who have cried every month when they realized that they had not conceived the baby they so desperately wanted. I know men and women who have undergone multiple tests and procedures just to conceive a child. They would gladly adopt a baby that someone else didn't want.

Instead, today, we are voting once more on another piece of legislation that would drastically reduce protections for life. This bill would create the basis for taxpayer-funded abortion at the Federal level, and it would permanently allow abortion until birth for any reason throughout the Nation. It would force government-funded healthcare providers and hospitals to provide abortions.

We cannot have that. We cannot bring abortion into a healthcare debate because it is not healthcare. Abortion is murder.

If we want to discuss protecting rights for all Americans, it needs to pertain to everyone, including and, especially, newborns.

While I always welcome a conversation with my colleagues about how we can advance women's rights and the rights of all people, this is not the way to do it. It is not through thinly veiled messaging bills with nice names but radical policies.

We can pass good pro-woman, pro-family, pro-American legislation through bipartisan solutions.

So if we are going to do it, let's do it; but today, sadly, we won't, and that is so disappointing.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Colorado (Mr. NEGUSE).

Mr. NEGUSE. Madam Speaker, I thank the chairman for his leadership.

I rise today in strong support of the equal rights amendment and the resolution before us.

Today, this body comes together unabashed in our conviction for a future that expands the vision set forth by our Founders. Together, we strive for a nation that advances the notion of equality, that takes up the mantle of the unfinished work that is the American Dream and the practice of government by and for the people—for all the people.

My daughter, Natalie, is just over a year-and-a-half old, and I look forward to telling her one day about today, how the people's House, led by the Chamber's first female Speaker, voted to ensure that the women of her generation will be the first to grow up knowing that the Constitution truly guarantees equal rights.

It feels fitting to close by quoting Shirley Chisolm, the first Black female Member elected to this body and the youngest, until my good friend LAUREN UNDERWOOD took office last year, who said, when Congress sent the ERA to the States for ratification: "The time is clearly now to put this House on record for the fullest expression of that equality of opportunity which our Founding Fathers professed. . . . It is not too late to complete the work they left undone."

I support the resolution.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX).

Ms. FOXX of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Georgia for yielding time.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.J. Res. 79.

As a woman who has worked all her life, often in male-dominated professions, I detest discrimination in any form against any group, and I have always done all that I can to eliminate it. Furthermore, I welcome any discussion on how to root out discrimination against women where it exists.

But do not be deceived. This is not what this legislation is about.

The 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution already provides women and all Americans equal protection under the law, but the goal of this legislation is different. The goal here is to expand access to abortion up to birth and to overturn the broadly supported policies that protect taxpayers from being forced to pay for abortions.

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As we know all too well, *Roe v. Wade* has broadly legalized abortion in the United States, but the equal rights amendment that this resolution tries to ratify goes much further.

There is a broad consensus that the ERA could be used to overturn pro-life

laws, legalize abortion up to birth, and mandate taxpayer-funded abortions.

The expansion of abortion is not the only harmful impact of the ERA. It would have a harmful impact on shelters that protect women from violence, eliminate women-specific workplace protections, and destroy women's sports.

Furthermore, were this resolution ever to become law, the Supreme Court would undoubtedly rule that it does not ratify the equal rights amendment.

As everyone in this room knows, when Congress initially passed the equal rights amendment, it intentionally included a 7-year deadline for the required 38 States to ratify, a deadline which has long since passed. Multiple States have also rescinded their ratification.

As such, Supreme Court precedent requires that any attempt to ratify the ERA must start at the beginning. Even Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was recently quoted saying she would like the process to start over.

To be perfectly clear, with this resolution, the Democrats are attempting to write into the Constitution the right to an abortion at all three trimesters, force taxpayers to pay for them, and eliminate all conscience protections for medical providers who wish to abstain from abortion.

This resolution is not about protecting women. It is a partisan messaging bill designed to appease radical pro-abortion groups. If the majority were serious about the equal rights amendment, it would start the process anew and give all States the option to consider the ERA again.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I would remind everyone that the equal rights amendment simply says: Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied on account of sex.

If people on the other side want to admit that equality of rights under the law means there must be a constitutional right to abortion, well, that is wonderful. Of course, the constitutional right to abortion is already established under current law.

Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. JAYAPAL).

Ms. JAYAPAL. Madam Speaker, what a glorious day this is.

Today, the House of Representatives will vote to remove the arbitrary deadline to ratify the equal rights amendment. With our vote today, and with Virginia's historic vote to become the 38th and final State necessary to ratify the amendment, little girls, their moms, and women across this great Nation will know that, yes, our Constitution can, will, and must enshrine a ban on discrimination on the basis of sex.

Equality of sexes is not debatable. It has no expiration date.

First proposed almost a century ago and passed by Congress in 1972, the equal rights amendment would be a momentous step forward for women to

end unequal pay, pregnancy discrimination, and sexual harassment and exploitation.

So today, to women across this country who are watching, as the first South Asian woman ever elected to the House of Representatives, let me say: We see you. We stand with you. And we will fight for you.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Georgia (Mrs. MCBATH).

Mrs. MCBATH. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, women have been fighting tooth and nail for decades to be recognized as equal under the eyes of the law. While we made significant gains, it is time for a full constitutional equality.

In 1866, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, a free-born Black woman, addressed the National Women's Rights Convention in New York City, and she said: "Justice is not fulfilled so long as woman is unequal before the law. We are all bound up together in one great bundle of humanity. . . . Society cannot afford to neglect the enlightenment of any class of its members."

These words still hold true today for our mothers, for our daughters, and for our future leaders. We must take up the mantle of the women who came before us and pass this amendment for a more just future.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), the distinguished Speaker of the House.

Ms. PELOSI. Madam Speaker, I am so pleased that the gentlewoman from Virginia is in the Chair and grateful to her for her leadership and our other colleagues, ELAINE LURIA and ABIGAIL SPANBERGER, as new Members of Congress who give us the opportunity as the majority to bring this important legislation to the floor. I thank them for Virginia's leadership in all of this. It is so appropriate that the Congresswoman is in the Chair for this because she was a leader in the State legislature on the equal rights amendment when she served there.

This is a historic day, a happy day, as the House takes action to move our Nation closer to our founding ideal that all are created equal. I salute Congresswoman JACKIE SPEIER for her leadership on this resolution and for her lifetime of work to advance equality in America.

The gentlewoman quoted the late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, and I think it bears repetition. Justice Scalia said: "Certainly the Constitution does not require discrimination on the basis of sex. The only issue is whether it prohibits it. It doesn't."

It does not prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex. The lack of an ERA

has allowed the Supreme Court Justice to have this interpretation.

Here it is, we say it over and over again: Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." How can you have a problem with that?

Let me also salute Chairwoman CAROLYN MALONEY, our longtime lead sponsor of the equal rights amendment in the House, for her great leadership, and Chairman NADLER, the members of the Judiciary Committee, and all the Members who came to Congress committed to finishing this fight for the equal rights amendment.

I also want to acknowledge that yesterday, at our press presentation on this, in the audience was a Republican from Illinois who was responsible for Illinois passing the equal rights amendment, Steven Andersson. He was with us at the Capitol. We commend him for being a leader on the ERA, passing it through the Illinois statehouse.

What an honor and how clear that this is not partisan, perhaps only in the House of Representatives, but not in the rest of the country.

Let us acknowledge the millions of women in Nevada, Illinois, Virginia, and across America who have raised a drumbeat for ratification and reignited a nationwide movement for equality.

Nearly 100 years ago, Alice Paul, a Republican, introduced the equal rights amendment, the first proposed amendment to the Constitution calling for women's equality in America.

Fifty years ago, soon after becoming the first African American woman to serve in the Congress, Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm stood on this House floor to urge passage of the ERA, calling it "one of the most clear-cut opportunities we are likely to have to declare our faith in the principles that shaped our Constitution."

But today, in this year that marks the centennial of women having the right to vote, it is a shameful reality that the equal rights amendment still has not been enshrined in the Constitution. As a result, millions of American women still face inequality under the law and injustice in their careers and lives.

Without full equality under the Constitution, women face a devastating wage gap, and this has an impact not only on what families earn today but on women's pensions and retirement in the future. This is wrong.

Women face discrimination as they raise families. Sixty-two percent of pregnant women and new moms are in the workforce, but current law allows pregnant workers to be placed on unpaid leave or forced out of their jobs. And sexual harassment and assault too often go unchecked, all leading to women's underrepresentation at the decisionmaking table.

We know what the statistics are—what was it?—33 CEOs of the Fortune 500 companies are women. Really?

Today, by passing this resolution, the House is paving the way to enshrin-

ing the equal rights amendment in the Constitution. It will achieve justice for women and achieve progress for families and for our children, lowering wage disparity and increasing paychecks so moms can pay for their family's needs, such as rent, groceries, childcare, and healthcare.

We are able to strengthen America. It is not just about women. It is about America.

The ERA will strengthen America, unleashing the full power of women in our economy and upholding the value of equality in our democracy.

I have four daughters, one son, two granddaughters, and I can't even imagine how anyone could think of his or her daughter not having equality; his or her sister, mom, wife, not having equality. What is that about, that women should not have the same status of equality as men?

This has nothing to do with the abortion issue. That is an excuse. That is not a reason. It has everything to do with a respect for women: your daughter, your sister, your wife, your mother. And you are saying, by voting against this, that your daughter, your sister, your mother, your spouse should not have equal protection under the law in the Constitution of the United States.

To those who say that the ERA is not necessary, let me quote from a recent statement from the American Association of University Women. It states that many "Americans mistakenly believe that the U.S. Constitution explicitly guarantees equality between men and women." Perhaps you think that. "The equal rights amendment would, once and for all, guarantee constitutional equality between men and women. Its ratification would provide the constitutional guarantee that all men and women are truly equal under the law."

I urge a strong bipartisan vote for this resolution. It will be bipartisan in the United States Senate when we send it over there shortly, to ensure that women are truly equal under the law in America. Because we know in America, when women succeed, America succeeds.

Madam Speaker, I urge a "yes" vote.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, how much time is remaining for both sides?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Georgia has 11 minutes remaining. The gentleman from New York has 15 minutes remaining.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. DEAN).

Ms. DEAN. Madam Speaker, I thank Chairman NADLER for bringing this resolution to a vote and thank Representative SPEIER and Representative MALONEY for their work on this legislation.

This is a historic day. It has been nearly a century since the first constitutional amendment to guarantee

equal treatment for women was introduced in 1923. Since then, 37 States have ratified the equal rights amendment, including my home State of Pennsylvania in 1972.

Virginia's ratification of the ERA this past January brought us one step closer to this basic right that we will be held equal in the eyes of the Constitution. The motto of Susan B. Anthony's newspaper was: "Men their rights and nothing more; women their rights and nothing less." Today, we again say women will accept nothing less than equality.

ERA builds on the work of Anthony and others like Jeannette Rankin, Alice Paul, Ida B. Wells, and this diverse Congress.

I am filled with joy today because I am looking forward to going home and telling my granddaughters, Aubrey and Ella, that we are one step closer to a more perfect Union.

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Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY).

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, I thank Chairman NADLER and JACKIE SPEIER for their historic leadership on the equal rights amendment.

Madam Speaker, first introduced in 1923, the equal rights amendment is still as relevant and necessary as ever because we know that equality for women will always elude us when it isn't etched into our Constitution.

We have seen it when the Supreme Court gutted the Violence Against Women Act; we have seen it when judges don't enforce equal pay for equal work or when a Federal judge ruled that Congress didn't have the authority to outlaw female genital mutilation. But if your rights are in the Constitution, then they can't be rolled back by the changing whims of legislators, judges, or Presidents.

Women are long past due equal treatment under the law, and we will persist until it is firmly guaranteed. There is no deadline for equality. We demand our equality be spelled out in the Constitution, and we spell it E-R-A.

Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this important vote for equality.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. I reserve the balance of my time, Madam Speaker.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. LAWRENCE).

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.J. Res. 79, which removes the deadline for the ratification of the equal rights amendment. A woman's rights must be guaranteed by our government.

This bill is about the Members of Congress ensuring that the rights and equality for women are a part of our Constitution.

It is sad to watch those who lose their way because they will find any way to distract from the issue of equality. The Members on the other side are trying to interject abortion into this, but I want to say that even though we have come so far as women—there are a record number of women lawmakers here in this House—we have so far to go, and this corrects that injustice and recognizes equality for women under the law.

As the great Shirley Chisholm, the first African American woman in Congress, stated: "The time is clearly now to put this House on record for the fullest expression of that equality of opportunity which our Founding Fathers professed. They professed it, but they did not assure it to their daughters, as they tried to do for their sons."

The time is clearly now to put this House on record for the fullest expression of that equality of opportunity which our Founding Fathers possessed. They possessed it, but they did not assure it. We try as they tried to do for their sons.

Madam Speaker, I encourage support of this bill.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentlewoman from Virginia (Ms. WEXTON).

Ms. WEXTON. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank Congresswoman SPEIER for introducing this important resolution.

In 1923 Alice Paul introduced the equal rights amendment to include women in our Nation's founding documents. Nearly 100 years later, during my time in the Virginia State Senate, I sponsored the resolution for Virginia to ratify the ERA. But it wouldn't be until January 27, 2020, with the historic number of women lawmakers serving in the State legislature that the great Commonwealth of Virginia became the 38th and final State to ratify the equal rights amendment.

This was not simply a symbolic vote. Specifically affirming equality on the basis of sex in the Constitution will strengthen State and Federal laws that protect women. We need the equal rights amendment to ensure that equal justice under law is a constitutional right for women and not just an inscription over the entrance to the Supreme Court.

Finally, these words will ring true: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State on account of sex."

Today, I am proud to cast my vote in support of the ERA and in recognition of the tireless work of so many trailblazers and activists over the years, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. UNDERWOOD).

Ms. UNDERWOOD. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.J. Res. 79, a bipartisan bill that moves us closer to adopting the equal rights amendment.

Madam Speaker, American women are barrier breakers. We have broken down barriers and shattered glass ceilings in education, at work, in the law, in the military, and at home. We are in a new era where women are leading in ways that they never have before, but legal gender discrimination, pay disparities, and inequality remain. They will not go away on their own. That is why we need to ensure that women's rights are guaranteed by adopting the equal rights amendment.

I was so proud in 2018 when Illinois ratified the equal rights amendment at long last. Two years later, I am here on the House floor because the women of northern Illinois sent me here to fight for them. I am here to fight for our right as women to equal treatment under the Constitution of our great country.

Madam Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to move us one giant step closer to legal equality by supporting this essential bill.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI).

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution to remove the arbitrary deadline to ratify the equal rights amendment. This year is the centennial of the 19th Amendment, yet women are still fighting for full and equal rights under the law.

Women continue to face many barriers to true equality, including pregnancy and gender discrimination, unequal pay, and a lack of access to a full range of reproductive healthcare services. The equal rights amendment to the Constitution would provide for fundamental equality for women regardless of who is President, who is on the Supreme Court, or changes in Federal law.

Congress first approved the equal rights amendment in 1972, and my home State of Oregon was quick to ratify it the following year. Now, 38 States—the required three-fourths under the Constitution—have ratified the amendment. Today Congress will stand with our States and make it clear that it is time—actually way past time—to adopt the equal rights amendment. It is not too late to do the right thing. It is not too late for equality.

Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from the State of Virginia (Mr. BEYER), who is from the 38th State.

Mr. BEYER. Madam Speaker, it has been 97 years since the equal rights amendment was introduced in the 68th Congress and 48 years since the ERA passed the House and Senate.

In those 48 years, I have had three daughters and one granddaughter. Those four young women are brilliant, precocious, and accomplished, with strong character, great morality, and true nobility. These women are every bit the equal of any man I have ever met, yet our Constitution does not recognize their equality nor prohibit discrimination against them.

I am very proud that the Commonwealth of Virginia was the 38th State to ratify the ERA. We must permanently remove the deadline for State ratification and provide an essential legal remedy against gender discrimination.

Does this sound like a political stunt: "Women shall have equal rights in the United States and every place subject to its jurisdiction. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

No. These words belong in the United States Constitution. There is nothing partisan about recognizing men and women have equal rights under the law.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. I reserve the balance of my time, Madam Speaker.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY).

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, every single constitution in the whole world written since 1959, including Afghanistan, for example, has the equivalent of the equal rights amendment, but the United States of America does not.

Though my colleagues on the other side of the aisle and President Trump's Department of Justice may tell you otherwise, we need the equal rights amendment, and we need it now.

The requisite number of States have now voted to ratify the equal rights amendment. Last year my home State of Illinois was the 37th State to ratify, and this year Virginia brought us to that number of 38.

Today I will proudly vote "yes" to show my grandchildren—my granddaughters and my grandsons—that women are not only strong, powerful, and resilient, but also equal citizens under the law.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to stand with us.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. I reserve the balance of my time, Madam Speaker.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentlewoman from California (Ms. MATSUI).

Ms. MATSUI. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.J. Res. 79 and stand shoulder to shoulder with women to demand gender equality and justice.

When I think about the future of our country and what I want it to look like for young women and girls like my granddaughter, Anna, I envision a just and equitable society with fair play, diverse leadership, and equal access to basic healthcare rights. That is why the equal rights amendment is necessary.

For too long our country's structural barriers have cast a shadow over women's rights. With 38 States having affirmed their support for the ERA, we are one step closer to shattering those barriers.

This resolution negates misguided arguments that because it is an arbitrary deadline, the equal rights amendment is effectively dead. It is clear from the recent actions of Nevada, Illinois, and Virginia, and our collective voices, it is still very much alive, and we will not rest until it is ingrained in the most sacred document of our Nation's history.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to stand with our country's women and support our right to constitutional equality.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. I reserve the balance of my time, Madam Speaker.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentlewoman from California (Mrs. DAVIS).

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, 244 years ago women were left out of our Constitution by the men who drafted it. But since then, generations of women and men have blazed a steady trail towards equality in this country; but we still do not have constitutional equality.

I attended many ERA events representing the League of Women Voters in the 1970s, and if someone would have told me then that we would still be fighting for this in 2020, I would have said that it was a failure of justice.

Why is anyone against rights for everyone?

Madam Speaker, equal rights for women transcend your politics, they transcend your age, where you are from, and your gender.

Women in this country continue to receive unequal pay, suffer from harassment in the workplace, endure discrimination for pregnancies, and fight long legal battles over domestic violence cases. A correction of our Constitution is clearly long overdue.

Liberty and justice for all must apply equally to women and men in this country. Let's pass this resolution.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. I reserve the balance of my time, Madam Speaker.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished

gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ).

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, 28 days ago on Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, Virginia became the 38th State to ratify the ERA. After decades of struggle, 48 years after congressional passage, two-thirds of the States agreed to an amendment that secures equal rights for all American citizens regardless of sex. This amendment would touch every corner of our lives.

With 24 words our Nation will finally fully recognize women as equal participants in society.

To my colleagues opposing the ERA: What are you afraid of?

How can you oppose this resolution and then look women in your district, in your churches, and in your own homes in the eye?

Today is your chance to stand on the right side of her story. I implore my colleagues, vote "yes" on H.J. Res. 79. Let us finish this struggle and at long last have women and men finally equal under the law with their rights enshrined in the U.S. Constitution.

□ 1030

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 45 seconds to the distinguished gentlewoman from California (Ms. JUDY CHU).

Ms. JUDY CHU of California. Madam Speaker, since women gained the right to vote 100 years ago, we have made incredible progress—rolling back laws like those that kept us from serving on juries, owning land, or even getting our own credit card—and this Congress has more women than ever.

But true equality is still a goal, not a reality. The fact is women are still paid less than men for the same work, and we still have men passing laws that dictate our choices about our bodies.

It is clear, if we want equality, we need the ERA, and the people agree. We saw that at women's marches across the country and in the groundswell of the #MeToo movement.

That energy is leading to change. The people are speaking. It is up to us to listen. Arbitrary deadlines are no reason to silence our voices.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" and give women the same rights as men.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 45 seconds to the distinguished gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE of California. Madam Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support today of Congresswoman SPEIER's bill, H.J. Res. 79. I thank Congresswoman SPEIER and Congresswoman MALONEY for their consistent leadership as warrior women.

The ERA would guarantee rights to all and would finally affirm women's equality in our Constitution by removing this arbitrary deadline.

We know that, too often, women have been relegated to the sidelines and left

out of the Constitution, especially Black women and women of color. For example, there is still rampant gender wage discrimination.

Discrimination against women must end. That is why the ERA is so important. It would make sure that our government would ensure that women are treated equally, a right that needs to be clearly outlined in every aspect of our country.

I want my granddaughters, Jordan, Simone, and Giselle, to know that they are equal to men, that their rights are enshrined in the Constitution. They, like every girl and woman, deserve equality in their country. They should know that their country, the United States of America, has finally joined the rest of the world to stand up for their rights as American women.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 45 seconds to the distinguished gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. CASE).

Mr. CASE. Madam Speaker, I rise in very strong support of this resolution to advance the cause of full and equal rights for all women. I do so for my 1-year-old granddaughter for whom I deeply hope that, when she reaches the age of understanding, the ERA will be as enshrined in our Constitution as is the right to vote today. I also do so as a proud citizen of my Hawaii.

On March 22, 1972, when the U.S. Senate sent the ERA to the States, it was early in the morning in Hawaii; but by shortly after noon that same day, our legislature voted for ratification, the first State to do so.

For my country and Hawaii and for all of our women leaders who led this fight, past and present, I proudly join my colleagues in voting for the ERA.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 45 seconds to the distinguished gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ).

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, after nearly a century, the equal rights amendment is on the cusp of ratification.

At America's founding, women were intentionally left out of the Constitution. As second-class citizens, we lacked the right to vote, hold most jobs, or even own property. Today, we still receive less pay for the same work, and we face violence and harassment just for being women. But the ERA will prohibit all of that. In the eyes of our most sacred document, we will finally be equal.

Women's rights should not depend on congressional whims or who occupies the White House. These basic fundamental rights must be guaranteed.

But, if we want to hand a more perfect union to our daughters—and I have two of them—we must seize this moment to end sex discrimination. We owe it to the women who sacrificed before us and all of our daughters and sons who deserve a life of true equality.

So I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on this resolution to remove the arbitrary and outdated deadline for ratifying the ERA.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, may I inquire how much time I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER). The gentleman from New York has 1 minute remaining.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COLLINS. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin for a parliamentary inquiry.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Madam Speaker, parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Wisconsin will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Madam Speaker, it is my intention to raise a point of order that this resolution requires a two-thirds vote. I will argue the point of order when it is made, but I need to know when the proper time is to raise the point of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The proper time would be when the Chair puts the question on passage.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Madam Speaker, do I put the question before or after it is passed?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. At the time the Chair puts the question on passage.

Mr. COLLINS. Madam Speaker, I am prepared to close, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, it has been interesting, the discussion on the floor today. It has been interesting on both sides to hear the different aspects of why this bill is on the floor, why we are doing it, why we shouldn't be doing it, and many things. It has been interesting, the discussion, if you go from a strictly number-of-States category.

What has been interesting is my colleagues across the aisle have talked about that there are now 38 States, but they fail to mention 5 States that rescinded their votes. Five States would put you under 38.

What was interesting to me in the Rules Committee the other night, the argument was that, if they rescind it, it is not valid to rescind, yet you can add States after the time limit is up. That is an interesting argument to make if you are actually looking at it from the perspective of if they rescind it within the timeframe yet passed it after the timeframe, that that is okay.

Then I heard one of my colleagues actually mentioned the fact that, if we passed it in here today, that this would now become part of the process, along with the State of Virginia ratifying it, it is now part of our Constitution.

I am sure this was just a euphoric discussion about how this would actually go about, but they were also forgetting the Senate is involved in this. It is amazing.

I was really worried at one point in the discussion that it was said on multiple occasions that there was no protection in the Constitution for women. I was almost scared for a moment that

the 14th Amendment had been repealed and I didn't know it.

It is in there and still is in there. I checked just a few minutes ago. It is safe.

It is interesting to determine, when Ruth Bader Ginsburg, one of the foremost architects in looking at this bill even in the 1970s, coming forward, has said: If you want to do this, start over. Do it the proper way.

As my chairman has said earlier, basically, a deadline should not get in the way of what we want. A deadline should not get in the way of what I want to have happen. That is becoming more and more of a concern in this body, that the rules and parliamentary procedures don't matter if it interferes with what we want.

But, at the end of the day, the question really becomes: Why are we doing this? Why are we bringing this forth when there is absolutely no legal precedent, no constitutional precedent, no anything out there—including some of the founders who actually started this whole process 40-plus years ago, who said this is not the way you do it.

The reason I know that that is a concern is because some of those who have actually said this have been criticized in the media from the perspective of supporters of the ERA to say Ruth Bader Ginsburg's comments have now killed the ERA, or effectively done it. The reason is because she is speaking the truth about this issue.

We disagree on most everything from a legal perspective, but on this one, we happen to agree, and she has laid forth clearly what should happen here.

But let me also say—and it has been talked about a great deal, so I think we just need to come to the real scenario why this is happening. It is not that we believe it will actually happen. For anybody here who believes that today is actually going to put it in part of the Constitution, that is not going to happen.

So what is it? It is a political nod to the understanding of those who are speaking for this.

As we have heard earlier, NARAL Pro-Choice America:

With its ratification, the ERA would reinforce the constitutional right to abortion by clarifying that the sexes have equal rights, which would require judges to strike down anti-abortion laws.

Also, NARAL:

The ERA will support protecting women's right to abortion. With five anti-choice Justices on the Supreme Court and *Roe v. Wade* on the chopping block, it is more important than ever we codify women's bodily autonomy in our lives.

Codirector of Reproaction:

Abortion restrictions amount to sex discrimination because they single out people for unfair treatment on the basis of sex.

The senior counsel of National Women's Law Center:

The ERA would help create a basis for challenging abortion restrictions.

This is what this is actually about. This is what the basis has needed because there has been a shifting in this

country to understand that, in our opinion—in the opinion of many—abortion is simply murder in the womb. It is not about life.

It is interesting, we are talking about the rights of women today—which, again, this bill doesn't have anything to do with—but we are not concerned if the young women in the womb are even able to have a birthday. That is not a concern.

So what would happen from these folks who are supporting your resolution today? Why do they want it? Because it gives a claim, from start to finish, unfettered abortion.

So what does that mean? That means let's bring back partial-birth abortion, which, if I have to remind anybody here, means the delivery of the child all the way until the moment the chin comes almost out, and then actually crushing their skull. That is what that is.

If that is a right we are protecting, I don't want any part of it, and neither do most Americans. They don't want a part of it. But that is one of those restrictions that will be laid back.

It would also continue to allow unlimited abortions in any State for any reason, including sex selection.

It is interesting that we would talk about this today, the ERA, and use this, yet a family could choose to abort a child because it is a male or a female. Let's be honest about this.

But the bottom line for me, what really bothers me the most about when it is unlimited, unfettered access to abortion that this bill opens up, if it were to have passed, is one that hits close to home for me.

You see, a European country recently stated that a geneticist in Iceland said: We have almost basically eradicated Down syndrome people.

I thought to myself, for a second: That would be great. I mean, if we could actually remove Down syndrome and help those and cure that, that would be an amazing medical discovery for all people. Except there is one portion.

Do you know how they have done it? Through genetic testing and killing the children in the womb. They don't even let them have a birthday.

One Icelandic counselor counsels mothers as follows:

This is your life. You have the right to choose how your life will look. She said: We don't look at abortion as murder. We look at it as a thing that we ended.

Do you want to know why this has opened up, America? This is why.

And for those of us like myself who have a disabled child, I do not want to hear that we are protecting disabled rights and other rights when we are not even allowing them to be born in certain arenas.

Every day, I get a text on this phone. It is from my daughter. Jordan is 27 years old. She has spina bifida. She cannot walk and has never taken a step, and I believe it probably, given

the medical condition, will not happen this side of Heaven. But she rolls and she smiles. She goes to work 3 days a week. She gets herself up early to put her clothes on and take her shower and get a bus that she calls, and she goes to work.

The folks in Sweden, do you know what they want to do? Kill her. Because she is not as valuable, as a Down syndrome child is not as valuable.

Do you want to open this Pandora's box of no abortion restrictions? Then own what you are doing.

But when Jordan texts me, she texts me: Good morning, Daddy. I love you. How was your day?

Madam Speaker, when we found out 27 years ago—a week ago, 27 years ago—that Jordan was going to have spina bifida, we were a young couple just happy that God gave us a child, and to find out that she had a disability only kept our hearts more in tune to what God had given.

My wife went to school the next week, and she was telling the teacher about what was going on. She said: We are trying to figure out where we need to go to have Jordan, help when she is born and get some more medical attention.

This person looked at her and said: You know you have choices, correct?"

And my wife said: Well, yes. There is Northside Hospital and others.

She said: No. Oh, no, dear. You don't have to go through with this. That is your choice.

□ 1045

In other words, as my wife looked at her and said: "You're talking about my baby."

You see, when we go down this path, don't flower this bill up. Look at the ones who actually talk about it and say this is an open door to abortion on demand, with no restrictions, no government interference—in fact, government pays for it.

But before you do that, America, as we look around, I want you to think of the picture on the new Gerber baby ad of the young person with Down syndrome, who is now the face of Gerber baby food. If he was in Iceland, he would have been one of those that, as it said: Oh, we ended.

Think about my daughter, who, when we allow it out there for people who are struggling—and to get news that you have a child with a disability, that is one of the most amazingly devastating things that you can hear because you don't know what the future holds.

But what you do know is life is a gift from God, and that it is my joy to take care of her. We had 30 major surgeries before she was 5 years old, three of which were 9 hours in length. Tell me her life doesn't matter.

For someone who doesn't have the possibility of understanding, and they are given a choice because they have a disability, and somebody tells them and gets to them and says: Don't

worry. Disabilities are bad. Just go ahead and end that life, and go on with your life.

This is what this opens up.

So don't give me a bill that is going nowhere for the reasons that have been given. The true reasons are found in your own supporters. The true reasons are found in what we know to be true.

When you understand what this is about, then I will stand till I have no more breath in my body for the rights of those who can't speak for themselves.

It is amazing to me that it was said: What would I be saying to my daughter if I voted against this?

I would be saying to Jordan, as I will: Jordan, the 14th Amendment is still there. Protections in law are still there. And by the way, restrictions on abortion will not be done away with, and your life matters.

So if you want a picture of this, picture Jordan.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Once again, if Congress can enact a resolution putting a time limit, it can enact a resolution removing a time limit. And when the Senate passes this resolution, the ERA will be part of the Constitution.

Madam Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the distinguished gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. TLAIIB).

Ms. TLAIIB. Madam Speaker, I rise very proudly, the first Muslim woman ever elected in the Congress, in support of H.J. Res. 79.

Madam Speaker, what is even more interesting is what I have been hearing about this obsession to control and oppress women in the United States of America. I cannot believe it is 2020, and we are still debating the merits of the equal rights amendment. It is beyond time.

I want you all to know this is about women of color, women with disabilities, transgender women, immigrant women. These women are affected by issues like unequal pay, sexual violence, lack of access for healthcare, and poverty.

So much of what we are doing here, in trying to promote women's equality, is about gender, racial, and economic justice.

Madam Speaker, know this: A "no" vote today is condoning oppression of women in the United States of America. I urge support.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of equality and the principle that our Constitution was designed, not to shore up the dominance of the historically powerful, but to ensure the rights of all and to foster a society in which each of us is free to shape our future based on our abilities. The resolution today removes the deadline Congress put in place for the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. While ratification of

the Equal Rights Amendment is imperative to enshrine equal rights for women, I do not believe it is necessary to strike the deadline for ratification. By voting on this legislation we may imply that it is necessary for Congress to lift a self-imposed deadline. I do not prescribe to this view.

Congressional authority to propose Amendments to the Constitution and the mode of ratification is absolute. The language of Article V of the Constitution represents the Founders intent to create a stable government designed for change. Article V requires two-thirds of the House and Senate to propose an amendment. Congress can choose ratification through three-fourths of the state legislatures or state ratifying conventions. Once the amendment is proposed to the states, there is no Constitutionally imposed time limit on the ratification process. Article V of the Constitution is silent with regard to when a state must consider and ratify an amendment. For example, the ratification process for the 27th Amendment took more than two hundred years.

Historically, Congress has ratified amendments without specific time limitations. The first amendment to contain a time limit was the 18th Amendment which established the prohibition of alcohol. The text of the 18th, 20th, 21st, and 22nd Amendments each contained language limiting the time frame for ratification. In contrast, the text of the Equal Rights Amendment ratified by the states does not contain a time limit. It is the proposing clause sent to the states for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment which contains a seven-year time limitation. The language of a proposing clause is not binding. The current ratification process of the Equal Rights Amendment is properly before the states and is reasonable and sufficiently contemporaneous.

Having been ratified by Virginia, according to Article V, the ERA has become part of the Constitution. Furthermore, if the deadline is binding, then passage of this resolution, without passage in the Senate, does not cure the defect. Because the deadline is not binding, this resolution is not necessary, but also not harmful.

Women continue to face additional hurdles in the pathways to success. On average, women still earn less than men for the same job functions. Pregnant women often lack basic protections and reasonable accommodation in the workplace. Perhaps most concerning of all, violence against women is still widespread and undermines the educational and social potential of women and young children in this country.

I am proud to have worked with my Democratic colleagues in the House to pass legislation to remedy these inequalities. The House recently passed the Protect the Right to Organize Act (H.R. 2474) which protects workers who are trying to form a union. In most of America, women earn less than men, but women and men working under a union contract receive equal pay for equal work. We have worked to fill the gaps in the patchwork of existing laws governing how and when workers take time off to care for themselves and their families. Expanding the Family and Medical Leave Act to cover more working parents and low wage workers who are currently excluded from leave policies is a top priority.

Nearly two thirds of minimum wage workers in the United States are women. The House has successfully passed the Raise the Wage

Act (H.R. 582). This will raise the income levels of the most economically insecure households and is a step in the right direction towards pay equity. The Pregnant Worker's Fairness Act (H.R. 2694) is an important piece of legislation that will provide reasonable accommodations to pregnant women in the workforce. The House also passed the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (H.R. 1585) which expanded protections and provides critical funding for victim services, law enforcement training, and data collection.

However, even if all this legislation were to become law, it would not be the same as amending the Constitution to guarantee women equal rights.

Discrimination in the workplace, violence in the home, and institutional barriers require systemic legal and cultural change. Ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment provides an additional legal tool for combatting discrimination on the basis of sex.

We will continue the fight for equality and work towards a more inclusive and equitable society.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, over the course of many years, I have consistently sponsored and promoted women's rights legislation to ensure equal pay for equal work including most recently, the Paycheck Fairness Act.

In the struggle against wage discrimination, I voted in favor of 2009 the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act.

To help ensure that women are not disadvantaged in their careers because of time taken to attend to their families, I was an early and strong advocate of multiple legislative initiatives to provide family medical leave—including the groundbreaking bill that became law, the Family and Medical Leave Act.

And this year, I have cosponsored the FAMILY Act.

I voted to ensure that women's rights are protected in higher education by strongly supporting Title IX.

I have supported legislation to amend pension and tax policies that negatively impact women and I supported numerous bills to establish certain rights for sexual assault survivors including the Survivors' Bill of Rights which is now law.

Since the mid-1990s, I have led the effort to end the barbaric practice of human trafficking, a human rights abuse that is a perverted and unimaginable exploitation of women and girls that thrives on greed, disrespect and secrecy.

Twenty years ago, the U.S. Congress approved and the President signed legislation that I authored—the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000—a comprehensive whole-of-government initiative to combat sex and labor trafficking in the United States and around the world.

The Violence Against Women Act (See Division B) was reauthorized and significantly expanded by my law. Last year, I cosponsored the Violence Against Women Extension Act of 2019.

This past January, I authored another bill that was signed into law—my fifth major law on human trafficking—The Frederick Douglass Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Act.

After a young college student from my district, Samantha Josephson, was brutally murdered by the driver of what she thought was her Uber ride, I introduced Sami's Law to

make the ride share safer for all. In recent months it has been shocking to learn that thousands of women who use Lyft or Uber have been sexually assaulted and some have been murdered.

I arrive at the debate on the elimination of the deadline for the ERA from the perspective of my work to ensure equality and protection for women and every woman's right to be treated fairly and without exploitation.

The words of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg on the legal impermissibility of extending the deadline for ratification have sealed the fate of the proposed amendment. Justice Ginsburg's judgment is that the deadline has expired and that she "would like it to start over" presents a definitive view that the process has come to an end.

According to Vox, Justice Ginsburg also said "There's too much controversy about latecomers, plus, a number of states have withdrawn their ratification. So, if you count a latecomer on the plus side, how can you disregard states that said 'we've changed our minds?'" Five states—Idaho, Kentucky, Nebraska, Tennessee, and South Dakota—voted to ratify the ERA but later rescinded that ratification.

Today, however, one thing is absolutely clear from both sides of the abortion divide: ratification of the ERA with its current wording will likely overturn laws prohibiting public funding of abortion—like the Hyde Amendment—and undo modest restrictions on abortion including waiting periods, parental involvement, women's right to know laws, conscience rights including the Weldon Amendment and any ban on late term abortion including the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act.

Should the ERA be ratified without clarifying abortion-neutral language—to wit: "Nothing in this Article shall be construed to grant or secure any right relating to abortion or the funding thereof"—abortion activists will use the ERA as they have successfully used state ERAs in both New Mexico and Connecticut—to force taxpayers to pay for abortion on demand.

Consider this:

The Supreme Court of New Mexico ruled in 1998 that the state was required to fund abortion based solely on the state ERA and said the law "undoubtedly singles out . . . a gender-linked condition that is unique to women" and therefore "violates the Equal Rights Amendment."

In like manner, the Supreme Court of Connecticut invalidated its state ban on abortion funding and wrote in 1986: "it is therefore clear, under the Connecticut ERA, that the regulation excepting . . . abortions from the Medicaid program discriminates against women."

Today in Pennsylvania, activists are suing to eviscerate the abortion funding restriction in that state claiming that the Hyde-type restriction violates the Pennsylvania Equal Rights Amendment.

While I take issue with abortion activists who refuse to recognize an unborn child's inherent dignity, worth and value, at least activists on both sides agree that the ERA as written will be used in court as a means to compel public funding of abortion and to strike down the Hyde Amendment and other modest abortion restrictions at both the state and federal level.

NARAL Pro-Choice America plainly states: "With its ratification, the ERA . . . would require judges to strike down anti-abortion laws . . ."

A senior lawyer of the National Women's Law Centers said: "The ERA would help create a basis to challenge abortion restrictions."

The National Right to Life Committee states that "the proposed federal ERA would invalidate the federal Hyde Amendment and all state restrictions on tax-funded abortions."

And the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops agree and wrote "One consequence of the ERA would be the likely requirement of federal funding for abortions . . . (and) arguments have been proffered that the federal ERA would . . . restrain the ability of the federal and state governments to enact other measures regulating abortion, such as third-trimester or partial birth abortion bans, parental consent, informed consent, conscience-related exemptions, and other provisions."

According to the most recent Marist Poll (January 2020), 60 percent of all Americans oppose using tax dollars for abortion, seven in ten Americans including nearly half who identify as pro-choice want significant restrictions on abortion, a majority of Americans—55 percent—want to ban abortion after 20 weeks, and nearly two-thirds of Americans oppose abortion if the child will be born with Down Syndrome.

I believe that all human beings—especially the weakest and most vulnerable including unborn baby girls and boys—deserve respect, empathy, compassion and protection from violence.

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, today, I rise in support of H.J. Res. 79, which will remove a deadline for the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. This will ensure that our country fully accepts the impact of the recent ratifications by the states of Nevada, Illinois, and Virginia.

The Equal Rights Amendment represents the further advancement of women in our society. It enshrines the American ideal that "equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State on account of sex". While other existing statutes have been interpreted as prohibiting some forms of sex discrimination, there are still numerous avenues in which they are inefficient for the full protection of women under the law.

As representatives of communities across our nation, we must set an explicit example of our championing of women's rights. Women continue to face obstacles to their full equality, including through unequal pay, pregnancy discrimination, sexual and domestic violence, and inadequate access to health care services. As the United States, we must be mindful of the global influence we have, and we must ensure that gender equality is, without a doubt, enshrined in our foundational principles.

The bipartisan support of this legislation captures the will of Americans for the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. Therefore, I am proud to support this resolution as a crucial step forward for gender equality.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 844, the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the joint resolution.

The joint resolution was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the joint resolution.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Madam Speaker, I have a point of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his point of order.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Madam Speaker, I make the point of order that a two-thirds vote is required for passage of this joint resolution because it does have the effect of amending the Constitution.

And on the point of order, Madam Speaker, there was an extension that was passed in 1978, where this issue came up, which extended the deadline until 1982.

In 1982, the Equal Rights Amendment deadlines expired. In 1983, Chairman Peter Rodino, of the Judiciary Committee, decided to introduce H.J. Res. 1, which started the process over again.

The difference between what happened in 1978 and 1983 is that Chairman Rodino, and those who supported re-introducing and attempting to pass the Equal Rights Amendment, realized that it had expired and required a start-over.

I believe that this does fall under that, and that it does require a start-over, and I would ask the Chair to rule on whether or not the point of order is well-taken and this does require a two-thirds vote.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair is prepared to rule.

Pursuant to House Resolution 842, an affirmative vote of a majority of Members present and voting, a quorum being present, is required on final passage of the pending measure. The gentleman's point of order is overruled.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Madam Speaker, I appeal the decision of the Chair.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The terms of House Resolution 842 are unambiguous and so, consistent with the ruling of the Chair on September 16, 1977, to permit an appeal in this case would be tantamount to permitting a direct change in that resolution. As such, the Chair has not issued an appealable ruling, and the Chair will put the question on passage of the joint resolution.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Madam Speaker, I appeal that ruling of the Chair as well, which I believe is appealable.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. That ruling is not subject to appeal.

The question is on the passage of the joint resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 232, nays 183, not voting 15, as follows:

[Roll No. 70]

YEAS—232

Aguilar	Garcia (TX)	Ocasio-Cortez
Allred	Golden	Omar
Axne	Gomez	Pallone
Barragán	Gonzalez (TX)	Panetta
Bass	Gottheimer	Pappas
Beatty	Green, Al (TX)	Pascarell
Bera	Grijalva	Pelosi
Beyer	Haaland	Perlmutter
Bishop (GA)	Harder (CA)	Peters
Blumenauer	Hastings	Peterson
Blunt Rochester	Hayes	Phillips
Bonamici	Heck	Pingree
Boyle, Brendan	Higgins (NY)	Pocan
F.	Himes	Porter
Brindisi	Horn, Kendra S.	Pressley
Brown (MD)	Horsford	Price (NC)
Brownley (CA)	Houlihan	Quigley
Bustos	Hoyer	Raskin
Butterfield	Huffman	Reed
Carbajal	Jackson Lee	Rice (NY)
Cárdenas	Jayapal	Richmond
Carson (IN)	Jeffries	Rose (NY)
Cartwright	Johnson (GA)	Rouda
Case	Johnson (TX)	Roybal-Allard
Casten (IL)	Kaptur	Ruiz
Castor (FL)	Keating	Ruppersberger
Castro (TX)	Kelly (IL)	Rush
Chu, Judy	Kennedy	Ryan
Cicilline	Khanna	Sánchez
Cisneros	Kildee	Sarbanes
Clark (MA)	Kilmer	Scanlon
Clarke (NY)	Kim	Schakowsky
Clay	Kind	Schiff
Cleaver	Krishnamoorthi	Schneider
Clyburn	Kuster (NH)	Schrader
Cohen	Lamb	Schrier
Connolly	Langevin	Scott (VA)
Cooper	Larsen (WA)	Scott, David
Correa	Larson (CT)	Serrano
Costa	Lawrence	Sewell (AL)
Courtney	Lawson (FL)	Shalala
Cox (CA)	Lee (CA)	Sherman
Craig	Lee (NV)	Sherrill
Crist	Levin (CA)	Sires
Crow	Levin (MI)	Slotkin
Cuellar	Lewis	Smith (WA)
Cunningham	Lieu, Ted	Soto
Curtis	Lipinski	Spanberger
Davids (KS)	Loebsock	Speier
Davis (CA)	Lofgren	Stanton
Davis, Danny K.	Lowenthal	Stevens
Davis, Rodney	Lowey	Suozy
Dean	Lujan	Swalwell (CA)
DeFazio	Luria	Takano
DeGette	Lynch	Thompson (CA)
DeLauro	Malinowski	Thompson (MS)
DelBene	Maloney,	Titus
Delgado	Carolyn B.	Tlaib
Demings	Maloney, Sean	Tonko
DeSaulnier	Matsui	Torres (CA)
Deutch	McAdams	Torres Small
Dingell	McBath	(NM)
Doggett	McCollum	Trahan
Doyle, Michael	McEachin	Trone
F.	McGovern	Underwood
Engel	McNerney	Van Drew
Escobar	Meeks	Vargas
Eshoo	Meng	Veasey
Espallat	Moore	Vela
Evans	Morelle	Velázquez
Finkenauer	Moulton	Visclosky
Fitzpatrick	Mucarsel-Powell	Wasserman
Fletcher	Murphy (FL)	Schultz
Foster	Nadler	Waters
Frankel	Napolitano	Watson Coleman
Fudge	Neal	Wexton
Galleo	Neguse	Wild
Garamendi	Norcross	Wilson (FL)
Garcia (IL)	O'Halleran	Yarmuth

NAYS—183

Abraham	Bilirakis	Carter (TX)
Aderholt	Bishop (NC)	Chabot
Allen	Bishop (UT)	Cheney
Amash	Bost	Cline
Amodei	Brady	Cloud
Armstrong	Brooks (AL)	Cole
Arrington	Brooks (IN)	Collins (GA)
Babin	Buchanan	Comer
Bacon	Buck	Conaway
Baird	Bucshon	Cook
Balderson	Budd	Crenshaw
Banks	Burchett	Davidson (OH)
Barr	Burgess	DesJarlais
Bergman	Calvert	Diaz-Balart
Biggs	Carter (GA)	Duncan

Dunn	Kelly (MS)	Rose, John W.
Emmer	Kelly (PA)	Rouzer
Estes	King (IA)	Roy
Ferguson	King (NY)	Rutherford
Fleischmann	Kustoff (TN)	Scalise
Flores	LaMalfa	Schweikert
Fortenberry	Lamborn	Scott, Austin
Foxx (NC)	Latta	Sensenbrenner
Fulcher	Lesko	Shimkus
Gaetz	Long	Simpson
Gallagher	Loudermilk	Smith (MO)
Gianforte	Lucas	Smith (NE)
Gibbs	Luetkemeyer	Smith (NJ)
Gohmert	Marshall	Smucker
Gonzalez (OH)	Massie	Spano
Gooden	McCarthy	Stauber
Gosar	McCauley	Stefanik
Granger	McClintock	Steil
Graves (LA)	McHenry	Steube
Graves (MO)	McKinley	Stewart
Green (TN)	Meadows	Stivers
Griffith	Meuser	Taylor
Grothman	Miller	Thompson (PA)
Guest	Mitchell	Thornberry
Guthrie	Moolenaar	Timmons
Hagedorn	Mooney (WV)	Tipton
Harris	Murphy (NC)	Turner
Hartzer	Newhouse	Upton
Hern, Kevin	Norman	Wagner
Herrera Beutler	Nunes	Walberg
Hice (GA)	Olson	Walden
Higgins (LA)	Palazzo	Walker
Hill (AR)	Palmer	Walorski
Holding	Pence	Waltz
Hollingsworth	Perry	Watkins
Hudson	Posey	Weber (TX)
Huizenga	Ratcliffe	Webster (FL)
Hurd (TX)	Reschenthaler	Wenstrup
Johnson (LA)	Rice (SC)	Westerman
Johnson (OH)	Riggleman	Williams
Johnson (SD)	Roby	Wittman
Jordan	Rodgers (WA)	Womack
Joyce (OH)	Roe, David P.	Woodall
Joyce (PA)	Rogers (AL)	Yoho
Katko	Rogers (KY)	Young
Keller	Rooney (FL)	Zeldin

NOT VOTING—15

Adams	Kinzinger	Mullin
Byrne	Kirkpatrick	Payne
Crawford	LaHood	Welch
Gabbard	Marchant	Wilson (SC)
Graves (GA)	Mast	Wright

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). The Chair will remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of proceedings is in violation of the rules of the House.

□ 1119

Mr. GOSAR changed his vote from "yea" to "nay."

Ms. LEE of California changed her vote from "nay" to "yea."

So the joint resolution was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Speaker, due to a medical condition, I was unable to vote on the following Roll Call on February 13, 2020.

Had I been present, I would have voted: "yea" on rollcall No. 70 (Final Passage of H.J. Res. 79)—Removing the deadline for the ratification of the equal rights amendment (Rep. Speier—Judiciary).

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK. Madam Speaker, I was absent today due to a medical emergency. Had I been present, I would have voted: "yea" on rollcall No. 70.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was commu-

nicated to the House by Miss Kaitlyn Roberts, one of his secretaries.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 11 a.m. tomorrow.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. SCHRIER). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

HONORING MISS DAISY ELLIOTT

(Mrs. LAWRENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Madam Speaker, today, I stand here proud to say that I was one who cast my vote for the passage of ERA in America.

I also rise today to recognize a woman who was so very instrumental to the State of Michigan and its fight for civil rights, Miss Daisy Elliott.

Miss Elliott was only 1 of 11 women elected to the Michigan Constitutional Convention in 1961. She was key in ensuring that our State's constitution established the Michigan Civil Rights Commission, with the authority to investigate charges of discrimination based on race, religion, color, or national origin.

Daisy served in the Michigan Legislature for nearly 20 years as an effective and influential voice of equality and introduced more than 80 bills that were enacted, including the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act. Daisy Elliott was a fierce advocate for workers, senior citizens, and people of color.

Today, in honor of Black History Month, I salute and honor Miss Daisy Elliott. Madam Speaker, I honor her legacy.

OBSERVING NATIONAL CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH MONTH

(Mr. VAN DREW asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. VAN DREW. Madam Speaker, February is National Children's Dental Health Month. This month is a time when healthcare professionals, providers, and educators help promote good oral health practices to children, families, and many others.

Tooth decay is still the number one chronic infectious disease among children in the United States.

Throughout my career as a dentist, I can attest to the benefits of proper oral health and how important it is to focus on children from a very young age. Preventive measures like brushing, flossing, and rinsing correctly are important life lessons that should be learned from a young age.

I would also like to recognize the American Dental Association for their

strenuous work in this area. They have implemented the Give Kids A Smile program. It provides hundreds of thousands of underserved kids with free oral health education, screenings, and preventive and/or restorative services throughout the entire year.

It is a very much needed program, and I am personally very proud of the American Dental Association for the work that they do in this area.

SUPPORT MEDICAID EXPANSION, NOT BLOCK GRANTS

(Ms. KENDRA S. HORN of Oklahoma asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. KENDRA S. HORN of Oklahoma. Madam Speaker, I rise to speak on the issue of healthcare in Oklahoma. I hear from far too many Oklahomans who can't afford the healthcare they need.

Today, Oklahoma has the second highest rate of uninsured people in the Nation. Our State ranks 48th for uninsured children. We cannot continue to let Oklahomans fall through the cracks of our healthcare system.

The answer to solving our State's healthcare crisis is straightforward. We must expand Medicaid. By not expanding Medicaid, Oklahoma has lost up to \$1 billion per year. Seven hospitals across our State have closed, in part because we did not accept the healthcare support our State is entitled to.

Expanding Medicaid in Oklahoma would extend health insurance to up to 200,000 Oklahomans who don't currently have insurance. It is the right choice for our State. Instead, the administration and our Governor are proposing an alternative plan to turn SoonerCare into a block grant program.

The plan to block grant Medicaid would encourage cuts to healthcare services, restrict access to healthcare providers and lifesaving medications, and contribute to hospital closures. Too often, block grants have often been misused for political pet projects and to fill holes in the budget.

While we are still learning the specifics of the block grant plan, here is what we do know: more than 500,000 children rely on SoonerCare, and their insurance would be threatened by the plan to cap and slash Medicaid. Enough is enough.

CONGRATULATING DALLAS HIGH SCHOOL MOUNTAINEERS

(Mr. MEUSER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MEUSER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Dallas High School Mountaineers football team for their outstanding championship season.

Dallas football went undefeated during their regular season, going 15-0 with playoff wins and a district championship.